

Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revoking sentimentality. *[Miss Prism starts in involuntary indignation.]* But the baby was not there.

Miss Prism Prism! *[Every one looks at Where is that baby?]*

Miss Prism. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the bassinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

Jack. [Who has been listening attentively] But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

Miss Prism. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

Jack. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.

Miss Prism. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

Jack. What railway station?

Miss Prism. [Quite crushed] Victoria. The Brighton line.

[Sinks into a

chair.

Jack. I must retire to my room for a moment.

Gwendolen,

wait here for me.

Gwendolen. If you are not too long, I will *wait here for you

all my life.

[Exit Jack in great

excitement.

Chasuble. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

Lady Bracknell. I dare not even suspect, Dr.

Chasuble. I need

hardly tell you that in families of high

position strange

coincidences are not supposed to occur. They

are hardly

considered the thing.

[Noises heard overhead as if some one was throwing trunks about. Every one looks up.]